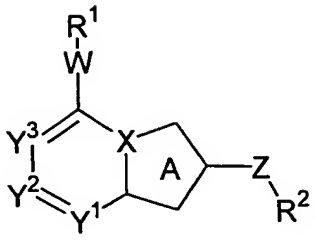
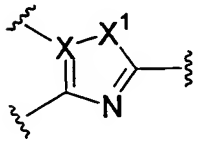
CLAIMS

1. A compound represented by the formula (I):



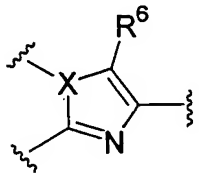
(I)

wherein, ring A is a 5-membered ring represented by the formula (A'):



(A')

wherein X is a carbon and X^1 is an oxygen, a sulfur or $-NR^5-$ (wherein R^5 is a hydrogen, an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl or an acyl), or formula (A"):



(A")

wherein X is a nitrogen and R^6 is a hydrogen, an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl or an acyl;

R^1 is (1) an amino substituted by two substituents selected from an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl group and an optionally substituted heterocyclic group, or (2) an optionally substituted cyclic amino, provided that the amino nitrogen of said cyclic amino has no carbonyl adjacent to the nitrogen;

R^2 is an optionally substituted alkyl, an optionally substituted cycloalkyl, an optionally substituted cycloalkenyl, an optionally substituted aryl or an optionally substituted heterocyclic;

Y^1, Y^2 and Y^3 are each an optionally substituted methyne or a nitrogen, provided that one or less of Y^1, Y^2 and Y^3 is nitrogen;

W is a bond, $-(CH_2)_n-$ or $-(CH_2)_m-CO-$ (wherein n is an integer of 1 to 4 and m is an integer of 0 to 4);

Z is a bond, -CO-, an oxygen, a sulfur, -SO-, $-SO_2-$, $-NR^4-$, $-NR^4$-alk-, $-CONR^4-$ or $-NR^4CO-$ (wherein alk is an optionally substituted C_{1-4} alkylene and R^4 is a hydrogen, an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl or an acyl);

provided that (i) the compound wherein ring A is the 5-membered ring of the formula A' (wherein X is a carbon and X^1 is a sulfur), W is a bond, Z is -NHCO- or -CONH-, and Y^1 is CR^{3a} (wherein R^{3a} is a hydrogen, a halogen, or an alkoxy) and

(ii) the compound wherein ring A is the 5-membered ring of the formula A' (wherein X is a carbon and X^1 is an oxygen, a sulfur, or -NH-), R^1 is an optionally substituted 1-piperazinyl, W is a bond, Z is a bond and R^2 is an optionally substituted aryl, are excluded;

or a salt thereof.

2. A prodrug of the compound according to claim 1.

3. The compound according to claim 1 wherein R^1 is an amino substituted by two optionally substituted C_{1-4} alkyl groups.

4. The compound according to claim 1 wherein R^1 is an amino substituted by an optionally substituted C_{1-4} alkyl and an optionally substituted phenyl or optionally substituted heterocyclic.

5. The compound according to claim 1 wherein R^1 is a 5- or 6-membered cyclic amino which may be substituted with one or more substituents.

6. The compound according to claim 1 wherein Y^1 is CR^{3a}, Y^2 is CR^{3b}, and Y^3 is CR^{3c} (wherein R^{3a}, R^{3b} and R^{3c} are independently a hydrogen, a halogen, a nitro, an optionally substituted C_{1-4} hydrocarbyl, an optionally substituted C_{1-4} hydrocarbyloxy, an optionally substituted C_{1-4} hydrocarbylthio, an optionally substituted amino or an acyl containing up to 4 carbon atoms).

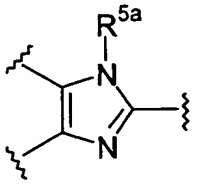
7. The compound according to claim 1 wherein one of Y^1, Y^2 and Y^3 is nitrogen.

8. The compound according to claim 1 wherein W is a bond.

9. The compound according to claim 1 wherein R^2 is an optionally substituted C_{6-10} aryl or an optionally substituted 5- or 10-membered heterocyclic.

10. The compound according to claim 1 wherein Z is $-NR^4-$ (wherein R^4 is as defined in claim 1).

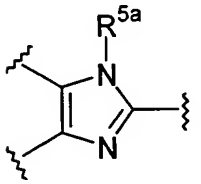
11. The compound according to claim 1 wherein ring A is a thiazole ring or an imidazole ring represented by the formula (Aa):



(Aa)

wherein R^{5a} is a hydrogen, an optionally substituted C_{1-4} alkyl or an acyl containing up to 4 carbon atoms.

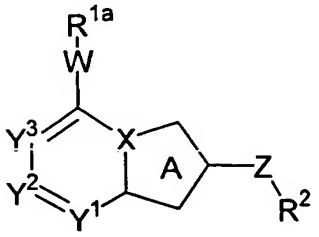
12. The compound according to claim 1 wherein Y^1 is CR^{3a}, Y^2 is CR^{3b} and Y^3 is CR^{3c} (wherein R^{3a}, R^{3b} and R^{3c} are independently a hydrogen, a halogen, a nitro, an optionally substituted C_{1-4} hydrocarbyl, an optionally substituted C_{1-4} hydrocarbyloxy, an optionally substituted C_{1-4} hydrocarbylthio, an optionally substituted amino or an acyl containing up to 4 carbon atoms); W is a bond; R^2 is an optionally substituted C_{6-10} aryl or an optionally substituted 5- or 10-membered heterocyclic; and Z is $-NR^4-$ (wherein R^4 is a hydrogen or an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl); and ring A is a thiazole ring or an imidazole ring represented by the formula (Aa) :



(Aa)

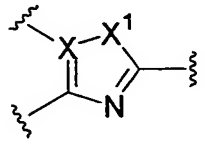
wherein R^{5a} is a hydrogen, an optionally substituted C_{1-4} alkyl, or an acyl containing up to 4 carbon atoms.

13. A method for treating or preventing a disease wherein a CRF receptor is implicated, which comprises administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a compound represented by the formula (Ia):



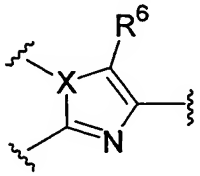
(Ia)

wherein ring A is a 5-membered ring represented by the formula (A'):



(A')

wherein X is a carbon and X^1 is an oxygen, a sulfur or -NR^5- (wherein R^5 is a hydrogen, an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl or an acyl), or formula (A"):



(A")

wherein X is a nitrogen and R^6 is a hydrogen, an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl or an acyl;

R^{1a} is (1) an amino substituted by two substituents selected from an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl group and an optionally substituted heterocyclic group, or (2) an optionally substituted cyclic amino;

R^2 is an optionally substituted alkyl, an optionally substituted cycloalkyl, an optionally substituted cycloalkenyl, an optionally substituted aryl or an optionally substituted heterocyclic;

Y^1, Y^2 and Y^3 are each an optionally substituted methyne or a nitrogen, provided that one or less of Y^1, Y^2 and Y^3 is nitrogen;

W is a bond, $-(CH_2)_n-$ or $-(CH_2)_m-CO-$, wherein n is an integer of 1 to 4 and m is an integer of 0 to 4;

Z is a bond, -CO-, an oxygen, a sulfur, -SO-, $-SO_2-$, $-NR^4-$, $-NR^4$-alk-, $-CONR^4-$ or $-NR^4CO-$ (wherein alk is an optionally substituted C_{1-4} alkylene and R^4 is a hydrogen, an optionally substituted hydrocarbyl or an acyl);

provided that the compound wherein ring A is the 5-membered ring of the formula A' (wherein X is a carbon and X^1 is a sulfur), W is a bond, Z is -NHCO- or -CONH-, and Y^1 is CR^{3a} (wherein R^{3a} is a halogen, or an alkoxy) is excluded;

or a salt thereof.

14. The method according to claim 13 wherein the disease being treated or prevented is selected from affective disorder, depression and anxiety.

15. Use of the compound (Ia) according to claim 13, or a salt thereof for manufacturing a medicament for preventing or treating a disease wherein a CRF receptor is implicated.

16. Use of the compound (Ia) according to claim 13, or a

salt thereof for manufacturing a medicament for preventing or treating affective disorder, depression or anxiety.

17. An agent for preventing or treating a disease wherein a CRF receptor is implicated, which comprises the compound (Ia) according to claim 13 or a salt thereof.

18. An agent for preventing or treating affective disorder, depression or anxiety which comprises the compound (Ia) according to claim 13 or a salt thereof.